

EXCISE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 17822

E.O. 12355: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET "WITHDRAWAL" OF SIX REGIMENTS

REF: MOSCOW 17020

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

2. MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN GERASIMOV, GENERAL STAFF DEPARTMENT CHIEF CHERVOV, AND MFA MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT SECTOR CHIEF MILYUSHIN OCTOBER 15 HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF SIX SOVIET REGIMENTS FROM AFGHANISTAN. CHERVOV'S OPENING STATEMENT AND THE ANSWERS TO THE JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS ADDED NOTHING NEW TO THE SOVIET POSITION.

OCTOBER 14 PRAVDA PUBLISHED A CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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LETTER TO THE SOVIET SOLDIERS WHO ARE RETURNING WHICH REAFFIRMS SOVIET COMMITMENT TO AFGHANISTAN AND TO MOSCOW'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE. END SUMMARY.

CHERVOV STATEMENT

3. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE, CHERVOV GAVE AN OPENING STATEMENT WHICH REPEATED THE OCTOBER 10 UNSIGNED PRAVDA ARTICLE (REFTEL). CHERVOV

INTER ALIA ATTRIBUTED THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SIX REGIMENTS (OR 6000 MEN) TO THE STABILIZATION OF THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND TO THE IMPROVEMENT IN DRA MILITARY CAPABILITIES. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE ASSERTED THAT TWO MUJAHIDEEN GROUPS

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC,MR

REVIEWED BY EC DATE 7/29

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WERE CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH THE DRA, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHICH GROUPS. CHERVOV NOTED THAT THE DRA STILL FACED DIFFICULTIES, BUT INSISTED THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH ITS PROBLEMS INDEPENDENTLY, WERE THERE NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. HE SAID THAT SECRETARY WEINBERGER LIED WHEN HE CLAIMED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL HAD NO MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE.

4. CHERVOV REITERATED THE STANDARD SOVIET LINE ON COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN, I.E. CESSATION OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND GUARANTEES AGAINST ITS RENEWAL MUST PRECEDE WITHDRAWAL.

QUESTIONS

5. IN RESPONSE TO JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS, CHERVOV AND MILYUSHIN:

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-- SAID SOVIET FORCES WERE NOT PARTICIPATING IN MILITARY OPERATIONS, BUT WERE GUARDING COMMUNICATIONS LINES, IMPORTANT FACILITIES AND INHABITED AREAS; THE LIMITED NUMBER OF SOVIET SOLDIERS WHO DIE DO SO CARRYING OUT THESE DUTIES;

-- DECLINED TO SAY HOW MANY SOLDIERS WOULD BE LEFT AFTER THIS WITHDRAWAL;

-- DISMISSED WESTERN ASSERTIONS THAT THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENTS SERVED NO MILITARY PURPOSE;

-- ADMITTED THAT THE "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY" FORCES WERE STILL STRONG, BUT ASSERTED THAT THE DRA MILITARY WAS MORE THAN A MATCH AND COULD HANDLE THESE FORCES, WERE THERE NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE;

-- DENIED THAT THE SOVIET OR DRA FORCES WERE USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS OR "BOOBY-TRAPS," BUT CLAIMED THE MUJAHIDEEN WERE USING SUCH WEAPONS OF "FOREIGN MANUFACTURE";

-- CLAIMED THAT THE AFGHAN CLERGY SUPPORTED THE REGIME AND THAT THE REGIME WAS ENCOURAGING ISLAM IN AFGHANISTAN;

-- CHARGED THAT ISRAEL WAS SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO THE MUJAHIDEEN;

-- DENIED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE LINKING PROGRESS ON REGIONAL QUESTIONS SUCH AS AFGHANISTAN TO PROGRESS ON ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT ISSUES.

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET "WITHDRAWAL" OF SIX REGIMENTS

ALTHOUGH CHERVOV NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE

EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ARMS CONTROL AND

DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS IN THEIR DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S.

U.S. ROLE

6. CHERVOV CHARGED THAT THE U.S. PROVIDED 320 MILLION DOLLARS TO THE MUJAHIDEEN FROM 1980 TO 1983, 150 MILLION IN 1984, 280 MILLION IN 1985, AND ALLOCATED AN ADDITIONAL 200 MILLION IN SEPTEMBER 1985.

IN ADDITION, HE CLAIMED THAT U.S. MILITARY ADVISORS WERE TRAINING THE MUJAHIDEEN IN PAKISTAN AND THAT THEY WERE PARTICIPATING IN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME

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WE HAVE HEARD THIS CHARGE. END COMMENT.)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MESSAGE

7. PRAVDA OCTOBER 14 PUBLISHED A CENTRAL COMMITTEE LETTER TO THE "SOLDIERS-INTERNATIONALISTS." THE LETTER PORTRAYS THE ROLE OF THESE SOLDIERS IN

AFGHANISTAN AS INNOCENT AND JUSTIFIED, CLAIMING THAT THEY RESISTED HOSTILE FORCES, AND SAVED AFGHAN CHILDREN, OLD PEOPLE, AND WOMEN FROM HIRED KILLERS. THE LETTER ALSO ASSERTS THAT WHAT THEY EXPERIENCED IN AFGHANISTAN DEMONSTRATES THAT THE "CLASS ENEMY" HATES EVERYTHING THE SOVIET UNION CHERISHES, E.G. CULTURE, FREEDOM, EQUALITY, ETC.

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IT ALSO DRAWS A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE SOVIET EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR II AND AFGHANISTAN, AND CLAIMS THAT SINCE THE REVOLUTION, THE SOVIET MILITARY HAS ALWAYS BEEN "INTERNATIONALIST" IN ORIENTATION.

COMMENT

8. THE SOVIETS ARE TRYING TO IMPRESS THREE POINTS ON WESTERN AUDIENCES:

- (A) THAT THE WITHDRAWAL IS MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT;
- (B) THAT THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN IS STABILIZING, WITH THE REGIME CAPABLE OF HANDLING ITS INTERNAL OPPONENTS; AND
- (C) THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN DO NOT HAVE ANY POLITICAL LEGITIMACY.

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9. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. HARTMAN--

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